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Illustration by Elizabeth Boscher

### Beside the Gate

By ISABEL McLENNAN McMEEKIN

The dahlias are like ladies  
Upon their way to tea,  
In silken frocks and mantles  
With flounces to the knee.

One maid wears pearly satin,  
And one wears ruby red,  
Another has a pompon  
A-top her golden head.

They've stopped to mince and chatter  
Beside the garden gate,  
They're talking to the sunflowers,  
I know they will be late!

## The Initiation of Betty Ann

By Miriam E. Mason

### Part II

**A**FTER all, it did not seem so scary. It happened that on the night chosen for her ordeal, Betty Ann's parents had gone away to attend a three-day County Sunday School Convention, and had left little old Mrs. Albany, who did work by the day whenever she could find it, in charge of the house. Mrs. Albany went to bed every night at eight o'clock, and was asleep seven minutes later, so it was easy to slip quietly out of the house at eight-thirty without her knowing it. The six other Warriors were waiting for Betty Ann and her brothers, and they all walked down the river road to the house cheerfully enough. Dixie pattered along, close to Betty Ann's side. He was to be permitted to share the night

at the Haunted House, and Betty Ann felt enormously comforted by the thought.

The night was still and hot and very dark, but Betty Ann could not keep back a little shiver when they walked into the Haunted House. Various bundles which the boys had carried now unrolled themselves into a pallet bed on the floor; Bob-Elmer lighted a lantern with a gloomy red globe. Treasurer George Lewis handed her a small package which he informed her contained lunch in case she should wake up at midnight and be hungry. Each of the Warriors left her with a word of solemn advice.

"Remember, no excuses count," President Kinney repeated as the Warriors

prepared to leave. "We'll be here by seven o'clock in the morning to see if you've passed the test."

It seemed terribly still after the boys had gone, and the red light from the lantern made weird shadows on the dusty walls and windows of the house. Now and then a train, whistling by on the railroad track below, made a long-drawn moan as it crossed the railroad bridge. Betty Ann hugged Dixie close in her arms and lay down on the pallet. If she could go to sleep, it would all be over in a wink — morning would be here, and she would be a Fearless Warrior.

Betty Ann waked up some time in the night to the sound of thunder drums and lightning flashes. She sat up in a moment of bewilderment before she remembered where she was. She pushed shut the door of the shack, hugged Dixie closer, and lay down again. Presently the rain began to fall; not lightly and daintily as summer rains frequently do, but with a heavy thud as if some huge giant had overturned the rain barrels of the sky.

She wondered what time it was, and hoped that it was almost morning. The heavy beating sound of the rain made it impossible for her to sleep, and, besides, the roof of the Haunted House leaked a little — right above her bed. She got up and stood at the window, looking out into the darkness. Down below the bluff, she could hear the Honey River roaring and foaming. It was a little river, and the summer cloudbursts made it rise quickly. She thought of the old story about the man coming back to visit the house, and shivered. What if she should suddenly look around and see him standing there in the room?

"Silly," said Betty Ann aloud. "There aren't any ghosts — and besides, if you're afraid, you don't deserve to be called a Fearless Warrior."

At that very moment, she heard a noise that made her heart jump furiously. It was a long, mournful wail from down below the bluff. With her face pressed against the window, Betty Ann stared into the blackness. Then, in a minute, she breathed in relief — half laughing at herself. It was the whistle of the mid-



night train as it came down the trestle and over the railroad bridge.

It was a long train, a heavily loaded string of freight cars; Betty Ann counted the lights as they creaked over the bridge, there were sixty-six. She was rather sorry when the red light of the caboose disappeared in the darkness. Even a train was sort of company. And there wouldn't be another until the Florida Flyer went through at two o'clock.

The cloudburst, with the suddenness of cloudbursts, presently ceased as quickly as it had begun, and the swishing of the river and the drip from the eaves were the only sounds. Betty Ann yawned. She was about to leave the window and go back to her bed when a new sound reached her ears; a rending, tearing sound like the sound of a falling tree, then a heavy splash.

"The railroad bridge!" whispered Betty Ann in terrified realization. She knew it must be that. These heavy cloudbursts sometimes washed out the little road bridges, and she had heard her father say that the Honey River bridge had been weakened. The sudden flood and the heavy train had been too much for the old bridge. In two hours now, the fast express would be along. Betty Ann shuddered as she thought what might happen unless they were warned. There was no lookout on the Honey River bridge.

Dixie whined and tried to follow as Betty Ann started out the door, carrying the lantern, but Betty Ann made him stay behind. "I suppose the boys'll think this is an excuse," thought Betty Ann mournfully, "but I can't help it if they do."

Slipping and sliding on the wet gravel and weeds, she made her way down the bluff path. After the rain, a faint moon had come up, and it showed her the angry little river, rearing and tossing over its banks. It showed only water where the railroad bridge had once crossed the river. The railroad, on its high trestle, seemed to end suddenly at the water's edge.

There was no time to lose. There was not time to go to a house and waken men who might know what to do. The only way to be sure was to go herself, up to the railroad telegraph station, a mile up the railroad track. There was an all-night operator there who knew how to warn trains. Betty Ann clenched her teeth. Once she had walked that long railroad trestle. But it was daytime then, and the boys were there too, watching and applauding. Now it was night and a dark, scary night at that. For a moment, Betty Ann wished passionately that she had not come to the Haunted House that night. But if she hadn't —

Holding the lantern carefully, she scrambled out onto the trestle. The rails were cold and slippery. Below and behind her she could hear the rushing of

the hungry water. It seemed to her that it took an hour to cross each rail, so slowly and carefully she had to climb over them.

"If the Warriors could see me now," she thought in breathless triumph as her knee slipped, and she jerked herself back up, "I guess they wouldn't say much about what girls can't do!"

Her fear began to slip from her; the night, the dampness, the danger seemed almost interesting, like some brave, fierce battle. And so, at last, she crossed the last rail of the trestle, and was safely on the ground track. Breathless and weary as she was, she began to run down the rails. There was no time to lose! And a swift passenger train, coming down the track, might not see the little red light of the lantern in time to stop.

The telegraph operator in his little cage at the railroad station, was startled out of his sleepiness when a slim, bedraggled girl came rushing into the station at twenty minutes before two that morning. Breathless and exhausted, Betty Ann finally managed to make him understand her story. The young operator paled, and with an exclamation of horror, turned to the telegraph board.

"I got them," he said presently, "and just in time. You're certainly a plucky — why, it's all right now, you've saved it. Don't cry now!"

For Betty Ann, who hadn't been afraid of the night, the darkness, the rain, or even of danger, had buried her face in the cushion of the operator's cot, and was crying bitterly.

"I'll never get to be a Fearless Warrior now," she sobbed, raising her head.

After all, though, she did. For, as President Kinney had said, there were exceptions to all rules. And certainly a girl who received a state medal for bravery deserved to be called a real Fearless Warrior, even if she was a girl!

### School Time

By CLAIRE BOYLE BRACKEN

Vacation days are pleasant,  
We like them, every one,  
But after all, we know that school  
Is even better fun.

What if there were no schools at all?  
No friendly books, no games of ball?  
What if we couldn't ever know  
Of boys and girls of long ago?

When we hear the school bell ringing,  
We'll answer with a cheer;  
Vacation days are over,  
But glad school days are here.

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"The way to God is by the road of men.  
Find thy far heaven in near humanity,  
Love thy seen brother as thyself,  
Thereby thou lovest him Unseen  
Who is the all."

—Sir Edwin Arnold.

### A Letter from Thomas Starr King

This letter, written away back in 1860 by a Unitarian minister who had just left the Hollis Street Church, in Boston, to take up work in San Francisco, has recently been given to the Historical Library at 25 Beacon Street. Through the courtesy of the librarian we are permitted to publish it. The Hollis Street Church was later known as the South Congregational Church and still later was very generally spoken of as "Dr. Hale's Church." As will be seen, the letter was written soon after Starr King's arrival in California, where he became a famous pulpit orator. It is claimed that his sermons and addresses during the Civil War saved the State of California to the Union.—Ed.

SAN FRANCISCO; FRIDAY,  
MAY 25TH, 1860

To the Sunday School Scholars and  
Teachers of Hollis Street Society,  
Boston,—

DEAR FRIENDS:

Perhaps you have been expecting some message from me for some time. At any rate I feel as though an apology is due to you that I have not written before. But the fact is that I have had to do and see so much since I arrived, nearly four weeks ago, that I have found time for writing only very short notes. And, of course, it would not do to write nothing but a short note to you. You would say—"Mr. King doesn't care much about us, for he writes to us from five thousand miles away, and only sends a few lines."

Now I must correct that last sentence, or some of the girls and boys who study geography will say that their minister has made a blunder. It is more than five thousand miles from Boston to San Francisco by sea, across the isthmus, which was the route by which I came. But it is a little less than three thousand miles by land, and this letter, written on such thin paper, is to go by land to you. Sometimes messages are sent several hundred miles by carrier-pigeons, whose delicate wings bear them swiftly over the forests and wild mountains, faster than a steam-car goes. And this sheet, lighter than a feather from a carrier-pigeon's wing, will cross the snows of the Sierra Nevada range, and fly through the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and over the plains where herds of buffaloes are ranging, and down the course of the Missouri river to the Mississippi, and then by rail road through the Western States and New York to New England, to tell you that you are not forgotten by him who writes it, and to convey to you the hope that you have not ceased to think kindly of him. How wonderful it is that a letter can travel so far and so safely, and be sure of reaching the very person to whom it is sent! A great steamer sailed from here last Monday, the same one on which I came to San Francisco from Panama. I wanted to write you by her, but I could not, and so I sent a message to your excellent superintendent that I should certainly send a letter soon. But this sheet will reach Mr. Lynch several days before the letter to Mr. Sawyer arrives in Boston. For it goes by the "Pony Express," by the route across the plains and through the mountains I



have just spoken of. A pony is saddled with bags that contain nothing but letters and a man rides him on a gallop about thirty miles. Then another pony is ready to take the saddle bags, and rush thirty miles further. Then another still takes the light load, and travels as fast as he can; and so on, each pony being prepared at a station, the instant one comes foaming in from the West. In this way letters are hurried to the borders of Missouri, where steam takes them to the East. It takes twenty-three days for a letter to go to Boston by steamer, and only fourteen days by this express. So if Mr. Sawyer sends you word, when he gets my message by the steamer, that I am going to write to you, you can say, "O, you are behind the times, Mr. Sawyer; we have already heard from Mr. King; our ponies have beaten your steam, although the steamboat had four days the start."

You have already heard, dear children and friends, that Providence was very gracious to us on our passage over the oceans, in giving us fine weather and smooth seas almost every day. I was not sea sick at all and enjoyed a great deal in the new shores and strange stars that I saw. It was very pleasant to see the Southern Cross rising higher and higher in the sky, after we left Cuba, as we sailed towards the isthmus, and then to see it sink gradually as we went north again on the Pacific, till we lost sight of it before we arrived in San Francisco. What should you think if you could look up every night and see a great cross, made of four brilliant stars, gleaming in the heavens over Boston? Would it make you think any more of Christ, and of the truth of the New Testament which is taught to you in the Sunday School? Very likely not. People are no better where the Cross shines before their eyes in the heavens. God tells us of his power and care in the stars that look down upon Boston Common just as plainly as in those that glow over the Equator.

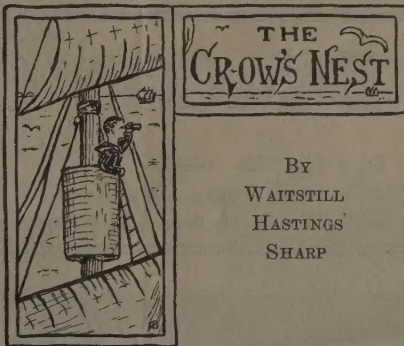
You cannot imagine, children, how splendid the flowers are here. Three weeks ago, before the leaves had come out on the trees in Boston, the whole country was brilliant with the brightest colors of wild flowers. Mountains that had no trees on them were carpeted with blue, and yellow, and violet, and splendid banks of orange-colored poppies. It was a glorious sight to see acres and acres of such beauty without a stone, or fence, or tree to mar the spectacle. And all over the country now the roses are in full bloom, and will be until next December. Strawberries are very plentiful and very large and they will be in market until November. It is a wonderful land!

The parish here is very large and the Sunday school has over three hundred scholars. The teachers and superintendent have worked just as faithfully when there was no settled minister as when there was one; and they have saved the parish so that now it is the most prosperous one in the city. I hope you will keep your interest in the school, remembering what I told you, and trying to help your devoted superintendent and teachers. . . .

Let me now give a greeting to each scholar and teacher, and, with the hope that each is well and happy, commend you to the love of the Father and say, "God bless you, one and all!"

Your faithful friend,

THOMAS STARR KING.



Did you ever think of your memory as a bank? Well, it is. Now let's see.

A bank, whether it's 5 x 4 x 3 or as big as a city block, is a place where valuable things are put for use and safe-keeping. When a man makes a bit more money than he needs to spend right off, he goes to his bank and gives it to a man who sits in an iron cage and is called "Receiving Teller." Mr. Receiving Teller makes a note of the amount and gives the depositor a receipt. And so the money is safe in the bank until Mr. Depositor wants to use some or all of it.

Now there are two kinds of banks:

1. Money Banks built by plasterers and stone masons and iron workers from bricks and stone and steel.
2. Memory Banks which are always being built and are never finished — the great store of memories which you and I are building.

Your memory is what we call your power to take up an idea about something that you have seen or tasted or smelled or touched or heard, and to hold it until you need to recall what that something looked, or tasted, or smelled, or sounded, or felt like.

Suppose you are burning some dry leaves in October and a wind takes the fire away from you and it burns a shed. You put all these ideas into your memory bank:

- (1) You had a fire in the leaves, AND
- (2) You thought that you could keep it small, BUT
- (3) An October wind blew so hard THAT
- (4) It burned faster than you could beat it out AND
- (5) HORRORS! it caught the dry shingles of the shed (The worst day of your life!), AND
- (6) Up roared the flames hot, and terrible, and RED.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

- (7) And as the fire chief sprayed the last extinguisher over the ashes you could hear them hiss: "S-s-s-seventy-five dollars-s-s-s gone up in s-s-s-smoke!"

Now that's not a pleasant memory because it is the memory of a bad fire. It

is an *expensive* memory because it cost \$75 for you to have the experience and \$150 for the fire department to keep it from being a worse memory for you. But anyway it's a *valuable* memory because, if you are a reasonable person, you'll try never to do that again.

There's a difference between pleasant and useful memories. Some of the toughest and hardest memories are the most useful. Here's what I mean: The second time you think of burning October leaves, you'll recall what happened the first time and *you'll plan to do something differently* so that those seven things won't happen again just as they did the first time when they cost \$75 or worse.

And so I call the memory of a fire, or of any hard law, a valuable memory to go into your memory bank. Would men and women ever learn anything if they didn't keep their memory banks open to put memories into? No, and they wouldn't learn anything either if they didn't take the time and the trouble to go back to their memory banks after they'd put a memory into it.

There must be room for tough memories and happy memories, but the only way to have that room is to see that there is always room for the *tough* memories by which we are always learning to do things better and differently.

#### Heart-and-Head-Stunt

1. Think back to your vacation. Name some valuable-and-happy memories.
  - (a) What makes them valuable? What did you *learn* from the events which you recall?
  - (b) What did you learn to repeat?
  - (c) Underline the ways of doing things which you found best: Neatly, Quickly, Steadily, Slowly, Carefully, Thoroughly, Bravely, Generously, Modestly. Can you add some ways?
  - (d) How will you use what you learned? Where?
  - (e) How many of the happy-and-valuable memories are about events which ended with a lot of fun and everyone happy?
2. Name some valuable-but-tough memories.
  - (a) Why were they valuable? What did you learn?
  - (b) Why were they tough?
  - (c) How will you use these valuable-but-tough memories?
  - (d) What ways of doing things *won't* you repeat again?
3. The more you use your money in the bank, what happens to it?
4. The more you use your memories, what happens to them?
5. Aren't you spending your time in your public school and in this church school so that you can learn how to do all things differently, and all things better, all the time?



# THE BEACON CLUB

## The Editor's Post Box

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.  
OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.  
OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

## Puzzlers

### Metamorphoses

(Substitute one letter in the word at the end of each line and make a word that could be substituted for the italicized word or words in the same line.)

Make a *cord* out of a spring;  
Make a *circle* of a wing;  
Now a *youngster* of a toy;  
An *exclamation* of "a-boy";  
Next a *puddle* of a tool;  
A *beast of burden* of a rule;  
Then fresh *pig-meat* out of cork,  
And an *Irish city* of a fork.

ELSIE M. MCCOLLUM.

### Charade

*My First*, described in "carats fine,"  
Is precious product of a mine.

*My Second*, as we all well know,  
Is used to sew but not to sow.

*My whole*, in shady pastures seen,  
Has bitter roots and leaves dark green.  
C. N. H.

### Answers to Puzzlers in No. 1

*Pied Verse*.—We all can work the better  
For having holiday,  
For playing ball and tennis  
And riding on the hay!

The great old book of nature  
Prepares us plain to see  
How very well worth learn-  
ing  
All other books may be.

*Alphabet*.—1, P. 2, B. 3, U. 4, J. 5, L. 6, C. 7, G. 8, O. 9, T. 10, Q.

*Twisted Automobiles*.—1. Maxwell. 2. Flint. 3. Hudson. 4. Packard. 5. Chevrolet. 6. Chandler. 7. Essex. 8. Buick. 9. Marmon. 10. Ford.

*What am I?* A Chipmunk.

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THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH SCHOOL OF EUGENE, OREGON

Dear Readers:

We are indebted to the girls in Mrs. Whytal's class — aged ten to twelve — for the fine picture of the church school in Eugene, Oregon, published above. One of the girls, Clio Barnes, writes that "The fine weather has drawn many of our number to the woods and shores," but it is surely a happy-looking group that is left. Shall we join in sending thanks to the girls for their thoughtfulness in sending us this picture of their group?

THE BEACON CLUB EDITOR.

347 CALLAHAN ST.,  
MUSKOGEE, OKLA.

Dear Beacon Club Editor: Here we are again, ready to meet one another after our long vacation. We had a lovely summer; it has not been so hot as other years and we have had lots of rain, so everything has been nice and green all summer. Last Sunday we went to visit a friend on a small acreage and she still has strawberries. Our seasons are longer here in Oklahoma than they are in Boston and we don't usually have very much winter until after Christmas. School opens next Monday (September 10th) and so I am getting ready to go. I go to a Methodist Sunday school because we have no Unitarian Church here. I hope that there will be one some day. I get *The Beacon* every week and like to read it. I am ten years old and in the fifth grade.

Yours very truly,  
LOUISE TERRY.

16 AUBURN ST.,  
CLINTON, MASS.

Dear Editor: I should like to belong to the Beacon Club and to wear its button. I am nine years old and am in the fourth grade. I go to the Unitarian Sunday school and my teacher's name is Miss Hennis. My minister's name is Rev. James C. Duncan. I get *The Beacon* every Sunday and enjoy it very much.

Yours very truly,  
BEATRICE GUTMAN.

1421 WASHINGTON ST.,  
EVANSTON, ILL.

Dear Club Editor: The other day I lost my Beacon pin and I wonder if I may have another one. I am a faithful reader of *The Beacon* and enjoy it immensely. I should like very much to have a correspondent in California or Europe.

Sincerely yours,  
KATHLEEN RYAN.

RIVER ST.,  
NORWELL, MASS.

Dear Editor: I am thirteen years old and in the eighth grade at school. I read *The Beacon* every Sunday and enjoy it very much. Our minister is Rev. Alfred J. Wilson and my Sunday-school teacher is Mr. Barnard. I should like very much to belong to the Beacon Club and wear its pin. I should also like to correspond with some boy of my age.

Sincerely yours,  
ALMON BRUCE.